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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate shot up to 9.7% (seasonally adjusted) in December.** The 1.2 percentage point increase over the November value represented the biggest one-month jump in the rate since 1982, and brought the unemployment rate to its highest level in five years. A growing labour force, combined with job losses, were the reasons for the rise in the jobless rate. The size of the labour force expanded 0.7%, while employment dropped 0.6% in December.

Unemployment rates were up in virtually every province. Manitoba (-0.2 percentage points, to 4.7%) was the only region to post a decline, while New Brunswick's rate was unchanged at 11.4%. Quebec's jobless rate also jumped to near-double-digit levels (9.7%) in December. Canada's unemployment rate rose 0.5 points, to 8.0% in December. Manitoba (4.7%) and Alberta (5.1%) continued to experience the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Source: Statistics Canada

- **The number of jobs in goods-producing industries continued to fall, as they have throughout most of 2001.** Employment was down (-2.7%, seasonally adjusted) for the third straight month. Manufacturing (+0.1%), where the number of jobs was unchanged from November, was the only goods-producing industry to escape the downturn. Utilities (-5.7%), construction (-5.3%) and logging, fishing and mining (-5.1%) were hardest hit.

In the service sector, employment was unchanged between November and December despite job losses in some industries. The number of people working in transportation and

warehousing dropped 7.0% as that industry continued to slump. Other industries with significant job losses include management and administration (-6.0%) and professional, scientific and technical services (-4.9%). Source: Statistics Canada

- **December's job losses were primarily among full-time (-1.5%, seasonally adjusted) and male (-1.1%) workers.** The number of people with part-time jobs increased 2.9% between November and December, while women held their own (+0.1%) in the job market. Self-employed workers felt the pinch, with employment falling 2.2%. Job losses for employees in both the public (-0.2%) and private (-0.2%) sectors were more modest.

The unemployment rate for men in BC climbed into the double-digits, increasing to 11.3%, a jump of nearly two percentage points from 9.5% in November. The unemployment rate among women rose more moderately (+0.6 points, to 7.9%). The unemployment rate for workers aged 15 to 24 was 15.2%. Source: Statistics Canada

- **Among the regions, unemployment rates ranged from a low of 6.1% (3-month moving average) in Northeast to 12.2% in North Coast/Nechako.** Kootenay (11.1%), Cariboo (9.8%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (9.7%) had unemployment rates that were at or close to the double-digit range. Kootenay was the only region where the jobless rate was lower than in December 2000. Source: Statistics Canada

Annual Labour Force Data

- **Employment in the province fell 0.3% last year, declining for the first time in nearly two decades.** An average of 1.942 million British

Did you know...

In 1998, Canadian universities granted 172,256 degrees—5.7 for every 1,000 people living in the country. That's down from a high of 6.1 reached in 1993. The rate was 4.8 in 1982.

Columbians had jobs last year, down from 1.949 million in 2000. BC and Saskatchewan (-2.6%) were the only provinces where employment declined in 2001. Nationally, the number of jobs increased 1.1% to an annual average of 15.077 million, with the strongest job growth occurring in Newfoundland (+3.3%) and Alberta (+2.8%).

Source Statistics Canada

- During 2001, the number of jobs in BC's goods industries shrank 5.4%, led by a 21.8% decline in resource-based activities (logging, fishing and mining). There were also fewer jobs in agriculture (-13.1%) and manufacturing (-4.5%). Mill closures affected both the harvesting and processing sides of the forest sector. In addition, BC industries are feeling the pinch from reduced demand for our products as the Canadian and US economies continue to slow down.

Service sector workers (+1.0%) fared better in 2001, with some exceptions. Fewer people had jobs in transportation and warehousing (-6.6%), finance, insurance and real estate (-2.8%), public administration (-1.0%) and other services (-1.5%) last year than in 2000. However, the information, culture and recreation (+6.8%) and professional, scientific and technical services (+3.4%) industries took on more workers.

Source Statistics Canada

- As with the December numbers, annual averages show a decline in self-employment (-1.7%) and full-time work (-0.9%), but an increase in the number of people with part-time jobs (+2.4%). Fewer men (-0.7%), but more women (+0.3%), had jobs in 2001, compared to 2000. Public sector employment inched back 0.1%, while the number of private sector jobs rose 0.2%.

Source Statistics Canada

The Economy

- The Help-wanted index for BC dropped 5.7% (seasonally adjusted) in December, the third largest decline in the country. Alberta (-7.0%) and Prince Edward Island (-7.2%) were the only regions that fared worse than BC. Canada-wide the index fell 5.3% with every province down. Saskatchewan (-1.4%) and New Brunswick (-1.9%) saw the smallest changes. Source: Statistics Canada

- The new housing price index rose for both Vancouver (+2.3%) and Victoria (+0.8%) in November compared to the same month of 2000. Among the cities surveyed, Ottawa-Hull saw the biggest price increase (+6.3%), followed by Montreal (+4.4%). On average, prices across Canada were up 2.7% compared to November 2000.

Source Statistics Canada

- The value of building permits issued in BC plummeted (-30.7%, seasonally adjusted) in November. Both residential (-32.0%) and non-residential (-28.0%) permits fell. The driving force behind this was large declines in both Vancouver (-28.0%) and Victoria (-42.8%).

Source Statistics Canada

- In the first eleven months of 2001, the value of building permits in BC rose 12.5% (unadjusted) compared to the same period of 2000. This increase was a result of growth in the value of both residential (+18.4%) and non-residential (+5.7%) permits. The largest gain was seen in Thompson Okanagan, where values grew 30.3%. This gain was the result of increases in all the regional districts in the Thompson Okanagan. The value of building permits was also up in Mainland/Southwest (+14.1%). The driving force behind this increase was the Fraser Valley (+43.4%). The largest decline in the province was in the Kootenay development region (-25.1%). Central Kootenay (-39.4%), East Kootenay (-12.7%) and Kootenay Boundary (-32.9%) were all down. Vancouver Island/Coast saw an 8.9% increase in the first eleven months of 2001, with the Capital regional district rising 24.2%. The number of residential building permits in Nechako dropped by more than two-thirds (-67.7%).

Source Statistics Canada

- BC housing starts fell 11.8% (seasonally adjusted) between November and December as new housing construction activity slowed in the last two months of the year. Starts were flat or down throughout western Canada and in Ontario. Quebec and three of the four Atlantic provinces experienced a building boom, with increases ranging from 9.5% in Newfoundland to 44.4% in New Brunswick.

Source CMHC

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Federal Immigration Plan for 2002

The newly-announced federal immigration plan sets 2002 immigration at a level slightly higher than that of this year, aiming at the long term goal of achieving an annual inflow of about one per cent of the Canadian population...

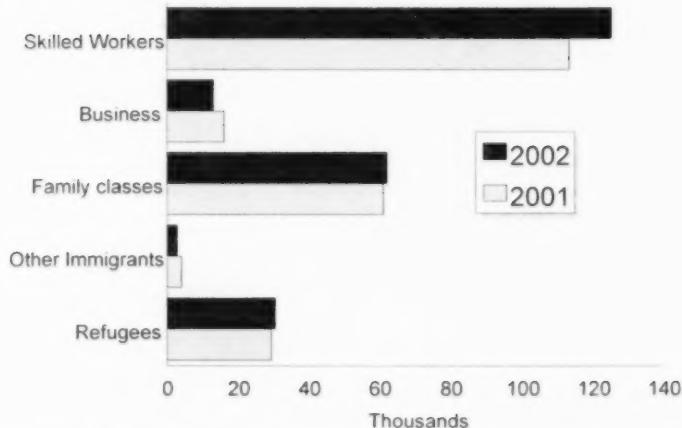
The planned level of immigration for 2002 is between 210,000 to 235,000 persons. This includes a projection of 187,000–204,600 immigrants and 23,000–30,400 refugees. When compared to the upper range in the planned levels for 2001, this new plan represents an increase of four per cent or 10,000 persons. The federal government has long established its long-term objective of attaining an annual immigration level equal to approximately one per cent of the Canadian population. In year 2000, immigration was at approximately 0.74 per cent of the Canadian population.

As noted by the Citizenship and Immigration Minister, immigrants now account for more than 70 per cent of all labour force growth in Canada. Economic immigrants have become more important in the overall level planning. In fact, when compared to last year's levels, most increases in the new planning levels are observed in the number of immigrants under the economic classes. The new plan projects an upper range of 139,800 economic immigrants, which is about 60 per cent of the overall landings.

The number of business immigrants has been declining over the last few years and the downward trend is also reflected in the new planning levels. The decline has primarily been a result of fewer business immigrants coming from Hong Kong and Taiwan. While the number of business immigrants coming from other Asian countries, such as South Korea and China Mainland is increasing, the level is still much lower than was observed during the first half of the last decade.

Immigration Planning Levels by Class

2002 vs. 2001 Plan



Family unification has always been a major theme of Canada's immigration policy. The number of family immigrants has generally been set at a relatively stable level. Family immigrants are mostly spouses, fiancés, children, parents and grandparents. The new plan projects an upper total of 62,000 persons, which is only slightly higher than the 61,000 persons planned for 2001.

The level for refugees is set at 23,000–30,400 persons, slightly higher than the 22,100–29,300 persons planned for 2001. Refugee immigrants include direct landings, dependents abroad, government assisted and privately sponsored refugees. In the new plan, refugees will represent approximately 10 to 12 per cent of the overall landings in 2002.

The new immigration plan also pointed out that the proposed Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Bill C-11) will enable government agencies to act more effectively on issues concerning public safety and security. The bill will introduce new inadmissibility grounds and strengthen authority to arrest/deport criminals or people who pose security threats. It will also restrict access to the refugee determination system for certain people such as those who have been determined to be inadmissible on security grounds.

The plan also mentioned that a number of initiatives are in progress to redesign programs related to temporary residents. These include a simpler and more efficient Temporary Foreign Worker Program for skilled workers and their spouse to work in Canada, which also allows qualified temporary skilled workers to obtain permanent resident status more easily.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)		Oct 1/01	% change on one year ago
BC		4,102.8	0.9
Canada		31,156.4	1.0
GDP and INCOME			% change on one year ago
(BC - at market prices)		2000	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)		127,564	5.8
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)		124,464	3.9
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)		30,664	3.1
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)		19,029	3.1
TRADE (\$ millions)			
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Oct		2,711	-11.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) Oct		2,329	-14.6
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Oct		3,179	5.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX			% change on one year ago
(all items - 1992=100)		Nov '01	
BC		114.9	0.3
Canada		115.8	0.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)			% change on one year ago
(seasonally adjusted)		Dec '01	
Labour Force - BC		2,118	-0.2
Employed - BC		1,913	-3.0
Unemployed - BC		205	36.6
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)		9.7	7.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)		8.0	6.8
INTEREST RATES (percent)		Jan 9/02	Jan 10/01
Prime Business Rate		4.00	7.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year		4.60	7.40
- 5 year		6.85	7.75
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		Jan 9/02	Jan 10/01
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$		1.5962	1.5001
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)		0.6263	0.6657
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE			% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)		Nov '01	
BC		650.84	1.2
Canada		638.14	2.5

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade,
Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates. Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca } Canada

Oops!

We have for several issues now published erroneous data on this page for year 2000 Personal Disposable Income and the associated per cent change on one year ago.

Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)

Corrected information appears

← here

We apologize for any inconvenience.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Tourism Sector Monitor, December 2001

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, December 2001

